

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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O R 071815Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4714
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AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1071

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO COMICEDEFOR, CINCLANT AND SECDEF

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR MARR IC NATO
SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION ISSUE - FOREIGN POLICY PLATFORM
OF NON-COMMUNIST LEFTIST PARTIES

REF: (A) REYKJAVIK 1015; (B) REYKJAVIK 1045

1. BYLFI GISLASON (CHAIRMAN OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS) ASKED TO MEET WITH ME ON AN URGENT BASIS THIS AFTERNOON. HE WANTED MY REACTION TO THE FOREIGN POLICY PLATFORM DRAFTED BY PROGRESSIVE PARTY CHAIRMAN OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN WHICH RTELATES TO DEFENSE AFFAIRS. THE PLATFORM WAS BASED ON NEGOTIATIONS EARLIER THIS WEEK AMONG SDP, PP AND OLL, AND IS TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLES ALLIANCE TOMORROW AFTERNOON ON A "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" BASIS. HOHANNESSEN WILL, HOWEVER, TRY TO CONVINCE PA TO ACCEPT IT IN ORDER TO FORM ANOTHER LEFTIST GOVT. AS REPORTED EARLIER, AGREEMENT AMONG THE FOUR PARTIES HAS BEEN REACHED ON ECONOMIC MEASURES, THE ONLY OBSTACLE NOW BEING THE DEFENSE ISSUE. THE PLATFORM SHOWN TO ME WAS IN ICE-LANDIC AND TRANSLATED ORRALLY TO ME BY GISLASON.

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2. PLATFORM (ARTICLES NOT NECESSARILY IN ORDER AS APPEARS

IN ORIGINAL DOCUMENT) STATES THAT AIM OF GOVT IS NOT TO HAVE A FOREIGN MILITARY FORCE IN ICELAND DURING PEACETIME. IT RECOGNIZES, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH A FORCE IS STILL NEEDED. IT SAYS SECURITY OF ICELAND DEPENDS ON CLOSE ASSOCIATION IN ALLIANCE WITH OTHER WESTERN NATIONS. IN PARENTHESIS, AS A FACE-SAVER FOR THE PA, THERE IS STATEMENT THAT PA OPPOSES THIS ARTICLE AND RESERVES FREEDOM OF ACTION TO OPPOSE IT. DRAFT PLATFORM CALLS FOR ON-BASE HOUSING FOR ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND TO COMMENCE SOONEST SEPARATION OF MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AIRPORTS WITH THE LATTER, UPON COMPLETION, TO BE ADMINISTERED SOLELY BY ICELANDIC CIVILIAN PERSONNEL.

3. PLATFORM STATES DEFENSE TALKS PREVIOUSLY INITIATED WITH USG SHOULD BE CONTINUED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH AIM OF REACHING AN AGREEMENT WHICH SAFEGUARDS THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND PURPOSES OF THE BASE AS DEFINED BY NATO. NEXT SENTENCE CALLS FOR "SUBSTANTIAL" REDUCTION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL WITHIN FIRST YEAR OF NEW AGREEMENT AND REPLACEMENT BY ICELANDIC CIVILIANS "TO EXTENT FEASIBLE" AFTER PROPER TRAINING.

4. OTHER PROVISIONS OF PLATFORM: (A) CALLS FOR AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY; (B) SUPPORTS INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL NATIONS; (C) OPPOSES COLONIALISM; (D) SUPPORTS UNITED NATIONS; (E) CONSIDERS ICELAND TO HAVE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER NORDIC NATIONS.

5. IN SHORT TIME AVAILABLE TO ME I CONCENTRATED MY COMMENTS ON ARTICLE REPORTED PARA 3 ABOVE. I EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE WORD "SUBSTANTIAL" AS CONCERNS REDUCTIONS AND STATED THAT DEFINITION OF THIS WILL LEAD TO CONSTAND BICKERING. I SUGGESTED SUBSTITUTE WORDING AS FOLLOWS: "THERE SHALL BE REDUCTIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE CONCEPT EXPRESSED ABOVE OF SAFEGUARDING THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS," ETC. GISLASON REMARKED THAT I WAS BEING TOO CAUTIOUS BECAUSE PA WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANY PLATFORM STATEMENT WHICH DOES NOT HAVE A CUTOFF DATE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF IDF, AND THAT THE WORDS I OBJECTED TO CAN ONLY BE READ IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRECEDING SENTENCE. HE

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SAID JOHANNESSEN TRIED TO INSERT THE FIGURE OF ONE THOUSAND REDUCTION BUT SDP OBJECTED TO ANY FIGURE. HE FURTHER STATED IT WAS FINALLY AGREED YESTERDAY BETWEEN HIMSELF, BENEDIKT GRONDAL (SDP VICE CHAIRMAN), AND JOHANNESSEN THAT ONE THOUSAND WAS TOO MUCH AND THAT "SUBSTANTIAL" WOULD BE DEFINED AS NUMBER MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TO USG AND GOI, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT PRECEDING SENTENCE OF THAT ARTICLE AND AVAILABILITY OF ICELANDIC MAN-

POWER. WHEN I ASKED HIM TO INDICATE A NUMBER HE DEMURRED, STATING "PROBABLY THE NUMBER USG OFFERED LAST NOVEMBER" (WHICH WAS 409). I CONTINUED TO EXPRESS CONCERN AND I REMARKED I HOPED HE WOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO ELIMINATION OF THE WORD "SUBSTANTIAL" AS BEING UNNECESSARY AND A POTENTIAL CAUSE FOR PROLONGING NEGOTIATIONS.

6. GISLASON SAID THE PLATFORM STATEMENT WILL PREVAIL IN WHATEVER COALITION GOVT IS FORMED THAT HAS PP OR SDP AS MEMBER. HE SAID ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC CRISIS THAT A GOVT BE FORMED BEFORE END OF AUGUST. PP AND SDP ENVISAGE A SIGNED AGREEMENT WITH USG ON IDF ISSUE SOMETIME IN SEPTEMBER TO GET IT OUT OF THE WAY.

7. WITH RESPECT TO FORMATION NEW GOVT, GISLASON SAID JOHANNESSON HAS GIVEN HIMSELF ONLY UNTIL AUGUST 9 TO SUCCEED OR ADMIT FAILURE. IF PA STILL REFUSES TO ACCEPT DEFENSE PLATFORM AT TOMORROW'S MEETING JOHANNESSON MAY ADMIT FAILURE RATHER THAN SEEK AN IP-PP COALITION. GISLASON SAID THAT HIS SDP PARTY DOES NOT WANT TO ALIGN WITH IP IN AN IP-PP-SDP COALITION BECAUSE IT MUST REGAIN A LEFTIST IDENTITY OF ITS OWN. HIS PARTY BELIEVES IT HAS LOST SUPPORT BECAUSE OF ITS LONG IDENTIFICATION WITH IP. WHEN I ASKED WHAT POSSIBILITIES REMAINED, GISLASON REMARKED IT WOULD NOT BE INCONCEIVABLE TO HAVE A MINORITY GOVT HEADED BY SDP, WITH A CABINET COMPOSED OF CIVIL SERVANTS, WITH EXCEPTION OF FOREIGN MINISTRY WHICH WOULD BE FILLED BY SDP. GISLASON WOULD BE PRIME MINISTER. IF THIS SHOULD MATERIALIZE GISLASON SAID HE WOULD HAVE ALTHING SUPPORT TO MOVE AHEAD ON SETTLING DEFENSE ISSUE IN SEPTEMBER.

8. COMMENT AND ACTION REQUIRED: IF DEPT HAS ANY ADVICE
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TO GIVE ME ON DEFENSE ISSUE BASED ON FOREGOING, IT SHOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO ME IMMEDIATELY. DEPT SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT OFTEN I AM GIVEN ONLY 5 OR 10 MINUTES TO REACT AND I MAY NOT BE SUCCESSFUL IN PUSHING ALTERNATIVES AT THIS LATE DATE. I BELIEVE POINT HAS BEEN STRONGLY MADE AND UNDERSTOOD THAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT A TIME LIMIT FOR WITHDRAWAL OF IDF NOR MODIFICATIONS WHICH WILL IMPAIR THE FUNCTIONS AND PURPOSE OF IDF. IN ABSENCE OF NEW GUIDANCE I AM PROCEEDING ON BASIS OF USG VIEWS EXPRESSED IN NEGOTIATING SESSIONS OF NOVEMBER 1973 AND APRIL 1974.

9. THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS TELEGRAM SHOULD BE KEPT IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.
IRVING

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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NNN

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